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WHEDON

CASSADAY

# VANISHING X-MEN

HOPE.

A CHILD IS THE GREATEST SYMBOL OF HOPE.

OF WILL.

THE WILL TO SURVIVE.

THE RIGHT TO EXIST.

WE ALL HAVE THAT RIGHT. THIS IS NOT BLASPHEMY.

IT IS OUR REVEALED TRUTH.

ALL WHO BEGIN THE VOYAGE...

...SHOULD TRAVEL SAFELY THROUGH.

FORGIVE ME, AGHANNE...

I KNOW. WE CAN'T HOLD FUNERALS FOR ALL THE CHILDREN.

THERE ARE HUNDREDS DEAD FROM THE LOOR-DJE NEST ALONE...

...AND IF THE OPEN HAND FINDS OUT WE'VE HONORED EVEN *ONE* DEAD...

...LET ALONE A *CHILD*...

WE HONORED HIS *LIFE*, DAFI.

OF COURSE. FORGIVE ME.

AND AS FOR THE OPEN HAND, THEY WILL MOVE AGAINST US NO MATTER WHAT WE DO.

WITH ANY LUCK, THE PROPHECY WILL COME TO PASS AND THEY WON'T HAVE TO BOTHER.

THE PROPHECY? BUT I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE...

OF COURSE I DON'T, LITTLE DAFI.

ONE HUMAN MAN CANNOT DESTROY A WORLD.

THE WORLD DOES THAT ITSELF.

WE FIGHT A TIDE OF BRUTALITY THAT WILL ENGULF US. I DON'T BELIEVE THE AUGURS AND THEIR TIME-SHADOWS, BUT NEITHER DO I MOCK THEM.

I SEE THE END DAYS IN EVERY WOUNDED FACE. HEAR IT IN EVERY DYING BREATH.

WHO COULD DESTROY SUCH A MIGHTY AND MERCILESS RACE...

"...AND WHO IN ALL THE WORLDS COULD SAVE US?"

# UNSTOPPABLE

STAND DOWN!

STAND THE HELL DOWN!

RASPUTIN!

DIE!!!

OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE...

HIT 'EM.

THRUMMMMMMMMMM

CELESTIAL HELL, BUT I AM SICK OF MAGNETS.

IT'S A LOCALIZED GRAVITY SURGE, ACTUALLY. HANDY FOR UNRULY PASSENGERS.

AGENT BRAND... YOU'VE GOT TEN SECONDS... TO TURN THAT... OFF...

OR WHAT?

OR ELSE.

THIS KID'S NOT A KILLER.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHO I AM.

GONNA PUT A BULLET IN MY HEAD?

FOR STARTERS.

ANYBODY STARTS ANYTHING-- I'M LOOKING AT YOU, ORD--AND I'LL TURN THE GRAV SO HIGH IT'LL LIQUIFY YOU.

LET 'EM UP.

AGENT BRAND, RASPUTIN IS *RIGHT HERE!* FINISH THIS!

MY PLANET IS AT STAKE!

WHAT IS *HIS* LIFE AGAINST BILLIONS?

DOESN'T PLAY OUT THAT WAY.

RASPUTIN'S AN ASSET RIGHT NOW. AND YOU'RE A PRISONER.

AS FOR YOUR ROBO-BUDDY...

I ASSUME YOU TRIED TAKING OVER OUR COMPUTER SYSTEMS THE MOMENT YOU MATERIALIZED. SO I ALSO ASSUME YOU KNOW WE HAVE AN AGGRESSIVE DEFENSE SYSTEM.

SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND OF THEM.

*YOU'VE GIVEN ME A VIRUS.*

*THEY WON'T KILL ME. MY CONSCIOUSNESS IS NOT LIMITED TO THIS BODY. BACK ON EARTH --*

WE'RE A LONG WAY FROM EARTH, SISTER. THE BODY YOU'RE IN NOW IS ABOUT TO GO DOWN WITH A NASTY BUG AND YOU CAN CONVALESCE IN A CELL TILL I FIGURE OUT IF YOU'RE USEFUL AT ALL.

WHY.

WHAT GAME ARE YOU PLAYING? WHERE ARE WE?

QUADRANT THETA 669, ON A SUB-LIGHT ARC FOR THE BREAKWORLD. THAT COURSE CAN'T BE CHANGED, NOT BY THE 'BOT, NOT BY YOUR MS. PRYDE.

WE'VE GOT MORE THAN A DAY, BUT IF YOU'RE UP FOR A BRIEFING NOW, I CAN--

NOT YET.

YOU GOT A PSYCHIC ON THIS SHIP?

WHY IS EVERYONE SO CALM?

SUCK IT UP, KID. WE BEEN OFF-WORLD LOTS.

AND I'M NOT SURE I'D CHARACTERIZE US AS "CALM".

ASSUMING THE TERM IS STILL IN THE POPULAR VERNACULAR...?

...I'D GO WITH *"FRIED"*.

NO, COME IN.
WE'RE FINISHED HERE.

POWERLORD KRUUN, THIS MESSAGE IS URGENT.

IT COMES FROM?

AMBASSADOR ORD.

ORD.

THE STINK OF HIS INCOMPETENCE WILL OUTLAST HIS BODY'S DECAY.

AS YOU SPEAK IT, IT COMES TO PASS.

RRZZTTP KRLORD KRUUN URGEKKTZ

LORD OF MY WORLD

I HAVE LITTLE TIME

I'M ABOARD A SWORD WARSHIP ON DIRECT SLING TO THE BREAKWORLD SILATYN HAS OUR COORDINATES

WHY MUST I HEAR PETTY--

COLOSSUS IS ON BOARD

AWAGH!!!

HHHNNN.

REROUTE THE BRUTESHIPS. INTERCEPT AND DESTROY THE VESSEL.

WE HAVE THE WORLD...

LET US RULE DESTINY AS WELL.

PAIN...

SEVEN GODS, THIS PAIN...

I NOTICE YOU'RE NOT SPORTING THE SHADES.

YEAH. I'VE LOST ACCESS TO MY POWER.

FROST DO THAT?

IT'S COMPLICATED.

I GOT A LOTTA VARIABLES ON THIS MISSION ALREADY. IF SHE'S A DIRECT THREAT—

AGENT BRAND, EMMA FROST IS AN X-MAN.

AND?

I'M UNAWARE OF THE NEED FOR A CONJUNCTION.

YOU ALWAYS TALK LIKE THAT?

EMMA'S ONE OF US. THAT MEANS SHE'S—

NOT HERE.

CASSANDRA NOVA IS NOT HERE.

THE MIND IS CLOUDED...

"...BUT IT MENDS."

LAST NIGHT.

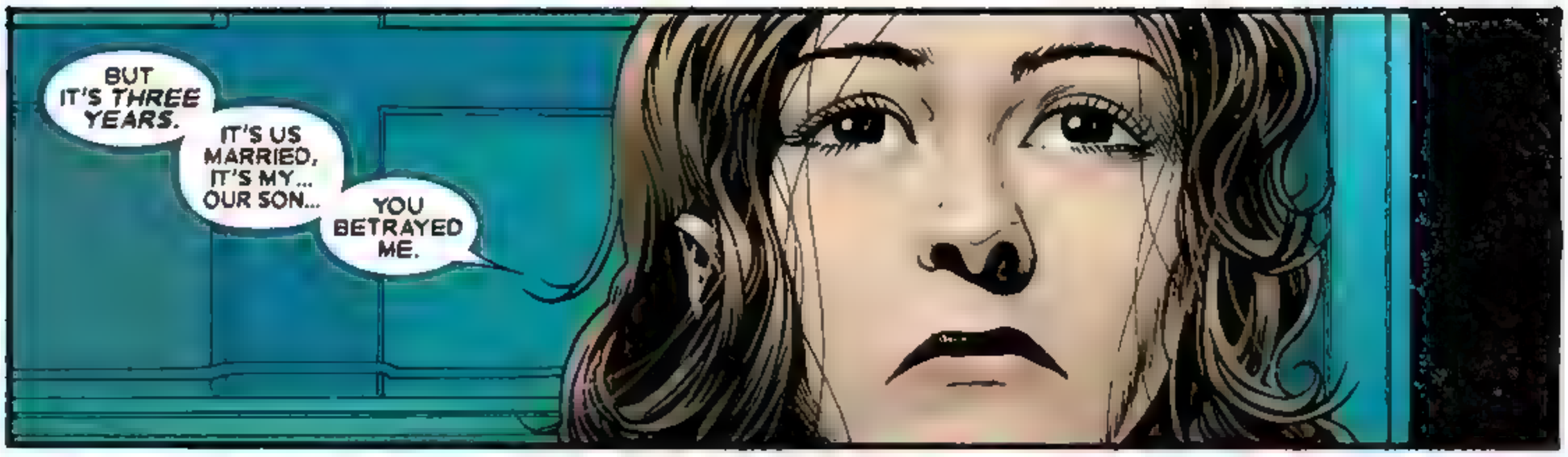
WE WERE TOGETHER LAST NIGHT.

FOR THE FIRST TIME.

DA.

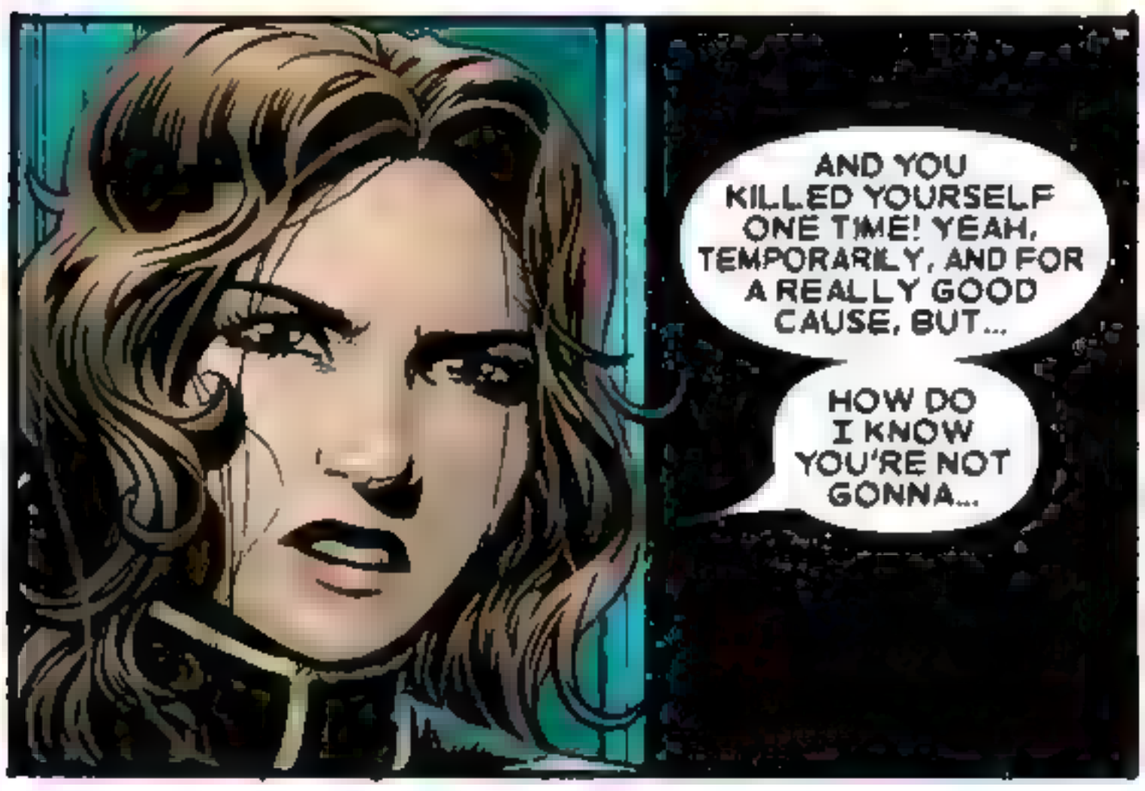
IT'S FADING, EMMA'S LITTLE PUPPET SHOW.

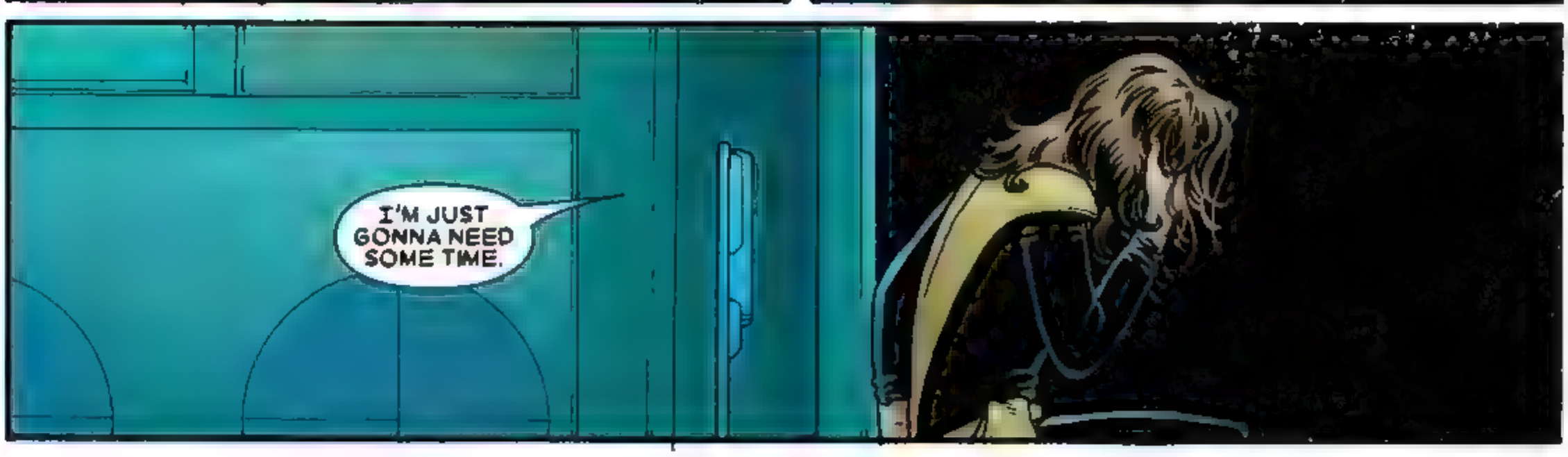
THAT MONSTER...


BUT IT'S THREE YEARS.
IT'S US MARRIED, IT'S MY... OUR SON...
YOU BETRAYED ME.

IT WAS A FANTASY --
YEAH, MY FANTASY. NIGHTMARE, WHATEVER...
THAT'S HOW SHE WORKED US ALL. SHE KNEW...

YOU DUMPED ME.
FIRST TIME WE WERE CLOSE YOU MET SOMEONE... ELSE, BETTER


AND YOU KILLED YOURSELF ONE TIME! YEAH, TEMPORARILY, AND FOR A REALLY GOOD CAUSE, BUT...
HOW DO I KNOW YOU'RE NOT GONNA...


I'M JUST GONNA NEED SOME TIME.

I DON'T GET IT, I DON'T LIKE IT, BUT THERE IT IS.

THE BREAKWORLD'S PSYCHICS--THEY CALL 'EM THE AUGURS--THEY HUNTED FOR THE X-MAN DESTINED TO DESTROY THEIR WORLD AND THE MIGHTY COLOSSUS GOT THE NOD.

I'M ASSUMING YOU'RE AS MYSTIFIED BY THIS AS THE REST OF US, RASPUTIN.

NO. I'M NOT.

I HAVE BEEN PLANNING TO DESTROY THE BREAKWORLD SINCE I WAS A CHILD.

THIS IS WHY I DON'T MAKE SO MANY JOKES.

I NEVER KNOW WHEN IS GOOD.

RIGHT. GREAT.

LET'S SKIP TO WHY YOU'RE HERE.

YOU KIDNAPPED US.

WE'RE NOT PAST THAT YET?

IT WAS FOUR HOURS AGO.

THE MOMENT THE AUGURS PINPOINTED RASPUTIN, AN ARMADA WAS SENT TOWARDS EARTH.

ON THE WAY TO HIS CELL, ORD BROKE FREE AND CONTACTED THE BREAKWORLD.

THAT ARMADA IS NOW HEADED TOWARDS US.

JUST LIKE YOU PLANNED.

JUST LIKE I PLANNED.

I WONDERED WHY YOU WERE SO SPECIFIC ABOUT OUR COORDINATES IN FRONT OF THE GUY.

I NEEDED TO DRAW THEM AWAY FROM EARTH. NOW THE BEST WAY TO KEEP THEM FROM BLOWING THIS SHIP INTO FRAGMENTS IS TO GET TO THE BREAKWORLD BEFORE THEY CAN.

AT CURRENT SPEED, WE SHOULD JUST MAKE IT.

THIS PLAN SEEMS OVERWHELMINGLY FLAWED, AGENT BRAND.

REFUGE IN THE LION'S MOUTH? WON'T EVERY LIVING SOUL ON THE BREAKWORLD BE LOOKING TO PUT PETER DOWN?

YOU THINK I HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF THAT, COOKIE MONSTER?

WHEN ARE YOU GUYS GONNA FIGURE OUT THAT THIS IS BIGGER THAN ALL OF YOU?

WHEN YOU FIGURE OUT WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH, YOU SILLY BINT.

SORRY I'M LATE. I THINK I PICKED THE GIST OF IT UP ON THE WAY.

ALTHOUGH AGENT BRAND DID FORGET TO MENTION THAT SHE'S TERRIFIED.

NOT OF YOU.

THE BREAKWORLD IS GOVERNED BY ONE PRINCIPLE: DOMINATION. BY VIOLENCE, WAR, EXTERMINATION...

POWERLORD KRUUN, OF THE OPEN HAND, THE GLOBAL RULER OF THE BREAKWORLD. HIS RISE TO POWER DID NOT, YOU'VE PROBABLY GUESSED, INVOLVE AN ELECTORAL COLLEGE.

AND HE'S WHAT YOU'RE AFRAID OF.

OH HOW I WISH.

SOMEWHERE, POSSIBLY HERE ON THEIR SMALLEST MOON, THE BREAKWORLDERS HAVE BUILT A FAILSAFE.

A MISSILE.

WE'RE FAIRLY CERTAIN THIS THING COULD CRACK THE EARTH IN HALF.

THE EARTH CAN'T MOUNT AN ATTACK ON A SUPERIOR MILITARY FORCE.

AND WE CAN'T DEFEND AGAINST THEIRS.

I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY'VE FIXATED ON RASPUTIN. LUCK OF THE DRAW. MAYBE.

BUT I DIDN'T KIDNAP YOU ALL FOR GIGGLES, OR EVEN FOR THE TIME I'LL BUY.

I DID IT BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, I NEED SUPER HEROES.

PLAN A IS WE LAND BEFORE THEY FIND US, FIND THIS MISSILE AND DISABLE IT. THEN WE CAN FIGURE OUT WHY--

AGENT BRAND!

NO.

WHAT'S PLAN B?

WE ALL DIE NOW.

WHAT'S PLAN C?

G85
EMPIRE